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THE NEW AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

A radio discussion by John Baker, Radio Service, and C. W. Kitchen, Agricultural Marketing Service, presented during the Department of Agriculture portion, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, July 5, 1939, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and 104 associated stations.

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BAKER:

On July 1 a new organization came into being here in the Department of Agriculture. This new organization is known as the "Agricultural Marketing Service." Some of the functions of this new agency have been performed by the Department for more than 75 years. Other duties and services date back 20 years or more. And some are rather new. In order that we may know more about the Agricultural Marketing Service, we are going to hear from the Chief of this organization -- and here is Mr. C. W. Kitchen.

KITCHEN:

We who are responsible for the work of this newly established agency of the Department of Agriculture feel that its name -- the Agricultural Marketing Service -- comes very close to describing the work assigned to us. It is a service and regulatory agency, concerned with various phases of the marketing of farm products. As Mr. Baker said, most of the work of this agency dates back 20 years or more, some even 75 years. In recent years, many of its activities have served producers through the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. But now they have been brought together under one service agency as a part of the reorganization of the marketing work of the Department of Agriculture which has been under way for several months.

Briefly, very briefly, we have two big jobs -- one job deals with production and market information on crops and livestock; the other deals with the standardization and inspection of farm and food products, and the regulation of certain marketing functions. These two main jobs involve the administration of some 17 specific laws.

Through the daily farm and Home broadcasts, most of you are familiar with our crop and livestock production reports and with at least some of our day-to-day market reports. In the future all Federal market and crop reports, whether issued at New York, Chicago, Kansas City, or at any of the other many markets where our men work, will come to you as a service of the Department of Agriculture through the new Agricultural Marketing Service. The daily "swing of the markets" over the Farm and Home Hour is only a sample of the many commodities and many markets reported by our field staff. Our market reports cover fruits and vegetables, livestock, meats, wool, cotton, tobacco, dairy and poultry products, and many other commodities. The men who have collected the information, compiled these reports, and sent them to you over the radio, through the newspapers, and in mimeographed form, will continue to do so in the future.

Knowledge of supplies available and of supplies to come to market is necessary to the plans of both farmers and business men. The general realization of this fact has resulted in a gradual expansion of our crop reporting services, until now, estimates of acreages planted, and the quantities harvested and used on the farm and sold, are reported for more than a hundred crops. These reports also include figures of the numbers of livestock produced, milk and egg production and consumption, on

prices received by farmers, on farm wages and farm labor, and on the movement and utilization of stocks of various farm products. The crop reporting service for many years has been regarded as the most dependable and accurate of its kind in the world.

The inspection services issue certificates which show the grade and condition of certain products. This service is a voluntary one, on canned and fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and poultry products, dressed meats, and several other products. The inspection service on tobacco sold on auction markets is mandatory, but only after growers have indicated their desire for it by referendum.

As I mentioned before, the Agricultural Marketing Service is responsible for the administration of 17 specific laws. Some of these are the Grain Standards Act, the Cotton Futures Act, the Tobacco Inspection Act, the Perishable agricultural Commodities Act, and many others. One is the Packers and Stockyards Act, which is intended to prevent losses to producers and dealers by prohibiting unfair practices and by establishing reasonable rates for services rendered in the livestock and live poultry markets.

All in all, the staff of the Agricultural Marketing Service totals approximately 27 hundred persons. Some 2 thousand of them are working in the field, serving farmers, shippers, dealers, consumers, and others. All work of these men in the field is directed and closely supervised by the staff here in Washington.

In order to give the most complete and thorough service, much of our work is done through cooperative agreements with State departments of agriculture and State agricultural colleges. There are some 250 of these cooperative agreements now in effect.

We here in the Department realize that when services rendered by one agency are transferred to another agency certain confusion on the part of the public is bound to arise. Now, in this brief talk with you today, I hope that I have eliminated much of this confusion -- by bringing to your attention the name of the new bureau in the Department, a bureau with which thousands of farmers and businessmen will have daily contact. The Agricultural Marketing Service was not created to handle new work. Most of its closely related activities -- its crop and livestock reporting, its day-to-day market reporting, its inspection and standardization work, and its regulatory functions -- have been in existence for a number of years. They have merely been brought together into one organization for more convenient administration by the Department.

Naturally we want you to become better acquainted with the activities of the Agricultural Marketing Service. The better you know the services which we are trying to render, the better use you will be able to make of them. From our own standpoint we want, and we intend, to maintain the reputation for service that has been built up over a long period of years. If you have any questions about our work, or any suggestions for its improvement, we shall be most pleased to hear from you.

Thank you, friends, - and thank you, Mr. Baker.

